

CLAIMS:-

1. An apparatus for heat treatment of glass articles or the like comprising an oven for receiving one or more glass articles or the like, heater means for heating a fluid medium which is introduced, in use, to an article or articles in the oven, the fluid medium being circulated or recirculated around the article or articles in order to heat up said article or articles in a closely controlled manner by the use of first and second control means, the first control means being for varying the temperature of a fluid medium and the second control means being for varying the velocity of a fluid medium introduced to said article or articles.
2. An apparatus according to claim 1 in which the first and second control means are arranged to co-operate with one another automatically.
3. An apparatus according to claim 1 or 2 in which the second control means varies the velocity of the fluid medium in response to the temperature of the glass article or articles in the oven.
4. An apparatus according to claim 1, 2 or 3 in which sensor means is provided for sensing the temperature of the glass article or articles.
5. An apparatus according to claim 4 in which the sensor is a pyrometer.

12. An apparatus according to claim 11 in which the signal from the fluid medium temperature sensor controls the heater means via a P.I.D. control.

13. An apparatus according to claim 4 in which the sensor means for sensing the temperature of the glass article or articles is connected via a P.I.D. control to control velocity of the air being recirculated in the oven.

14. A method of heat treatment of glass articles or the like comprising heat treating said articles under dual control means comprising controlling the heat output of a heater means and the velocity of fluid medium being circulated or recirculated in a chamber zone of an oven.

15. A method according to claim 14 in which the method includes sensing the temperature of the glass article or the like so as to vary the velocity of fluid medium being circulated.

16. A method according to claim 14 or 15 in which the heat output of the heater means is controlled by a sensor sensing the temperature of the fluid medium.

17. A method according to claim 14, 15 or 16 and where the glass articles are flat Cathode Ray Tubes, the method comprising positioning Cathode Ray Tubes vertically and parallel to one another on a vacuum cart proceeding through the plurality of zones of an oven and heat treating said plurality of Cathode Ray Tubes and by directing heated fluid medium in-between Cathode Ray Tubes of said plurality of Cathode Ray Tubes.

18. A method according to claim 17 in which the vacuum carts proceed through a plurality of zones of the oven in a time indexed manner, the indexing time between the zones being at least 10 minutes.